

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Withdrawn) A composition for forming a microporous ceramic material comprising:  
  
a metal silicon powder, and at least one nonoxide ceramic powder selected from the group consisting of a silicon nitride powder and a silicon carbide powder,  
  
wherein a mixing ratio of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder is 5 parts or more and less than 60 parts of the metal silicon powder with respect to 100 parts of the nonoxide ceramic powder in a mass ratio.
2. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, wherein a mixing ratio of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder is 25 parts or more and less than 45 parts of the metal silicon powder with respect to 100 parts of the nonoxide ceramic powder in a mass ratio.
3. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, wherein an average particle size of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder is in a range from 1  $\mu\text{m}$  or more and less than 50  $\mu\text{m}$ .
4. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 1, comprising a dispersion medium that disperses the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder.
5. (Withdrawn) A composition for forming a microporous ceramic material comprising:  
  
a metal silicon powder, at least one nonoxide ceramic powder selected from the group consisting of a silicon nitride powder and a silicon carbide powder, and at least one oxide powder selected from the group consisting of a yttrium oxide powder and an aluminum oxide powder,

wherein a mixing ratio of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder is 10 parts or more and less than 100 parts of the metal silicon powder with respect to 100 parts of the nonoxide ceramic powder in a mass ratio, and

the content of the oxide powder is an amount corresponding to 2 mass % or more and less than 250 mass% of the content of the metal silicon powder and not more than 20 mass% of the total amount of the metal silicon powder, the nonoxide ceramic powder and the oxide powder.

6. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 5, wherein a mixing ratio of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder is 20 parts or more and less than 90 parts of the metal silicon powder with respect to 100 parts of the nonoxide ceramic powder in a mass ratio.

7. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 5, wherein an average particle size of each of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder is in a range from 1  $\mu\text{m}$  or more and less than 50  $\mu\text{m}$ .

8. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 5, wherein an average particle size of the oxide powder is in a range from 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  or more and less than 1  $\mu\text{m}$ .

9. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 5, comprising a dispersion medium that disperses the metal silicon powder, the nonoxide ceramic powder and the oxide powder.

10. (Currently Amended) A method for making a microporous ceramic material composed mainly of nonoxide ceramic, the method comprising:

preparing a composition consisting essentially of a metal silicon powder, and at least one nonoxide ceramic powder selected from the group consisting of a silicon nitride powder and a silicon carbide powder, wherein a mixing ratio of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder is ~~between 5 parts or more and more, but~~ less than 60 parts

parts, of the metal silicon powder with respect to 100 parts of a total amount of the nonoxide ceramic powder in a mass ratio, and an average particle size of each of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder contained in the composition is in a range from 1  $\mu\text{m}$  to 50  $\mu\text{m}$ ,

molding the composition into a molded product having a predetermined shape, and

subjecting the molded product to reaction sintering in an atmosphere and a temperature range that allows nitriding for ~~between two hours or more and more, but less than~~ 12 hours.

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 10, wherein a mixing ratio of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder in the composition is ~~between 25 parts or more and more, but less than 45 parts~~ parts, of the metal silicon powder with respect to 100 parts of the total amount of the nonoxide ceramic powder in a mass ratio.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 10, wherein the composition is molded under pressure at a molding pressure set ~~in a range from~~ at 30 MPa ~~to or more, but less than 200 MPa~~ MPa, in the molding process.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for making a microporous ceramic material composed mainly of nonoxide ceramic, the method comprising:

preparing a composition consisting essentially of a metal silicon powder, at least one nonoxide ceramic powder selected from the group consisting of a silicon nitride powder and a silicon carbide powder, and at least one oxide powder selected from the group consisting of a yttrium oxide powder and an aluminum oxide powder, wherein a mixing ratio of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder is ~~between 10 parts or more and more, but less than 100 parts~~ parts, of the metal silicon powder with respect to 100 parts

of a total amount of the nonoxide ceramic powder in a mass ratio, and the content of the oxide powder is an amount corresponding to ~~between 2 mass% or more and more, but~~ less than 250 ~~mass%-mass%~~, of the content of the metal silicon ~~powder powder~~, and not more than 20 mass% of the total amount of the metal silicon powder, the nonoxide ceramic powder and the oxide powder, and an average particle size of each of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder contained in the composition is in a range from 1  $\mu\text{m}$  to 50  $\mu\text{m}$ , molding the composition into a molded product having a predetermined shape, and

subjecting the molded product to reaction sintering in an atmosphere and a temperature range that allows nitriding for ~~between two hours or more and more, but~~ less than 12 hours.

15. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein a mixing ratio of the metal silicon powder and the nonoxide ceramic powder in the composition is ~~between 20 parts or more and more, but~~ less than 90 ~~parts-parts~~, of the metal silicon powder with respect to 100 parts of the total amount of the nonoxide ceramic powder in a mass ratio.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein an average particle size of the oxide ceramic powder contained in the composition is ~~in a range from 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  to or more, but~~ less than 1  $\mu\text{m}$ .

18. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein the composition is molded under pressure at a molding pressure set ~~in a range from at~~ 30 MPa ~~to or more, but~~ less than 200 ~~MPa-MPa~~, in the molding process.

19. (Withdrawn) A microporous ceramic material made by the method according to claim 10.

20. (Withdrawn) A microporous ceramic material made by the method according to claim 14.